

EXCERPT FROM TESTIMONY BY SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK BEFORE
THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS AND ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES,

September 17, 1962

"Now, on the question of how we proceed with various measures and the question of taking action unilaterally, by the United States, no nation, certainly no great nation, can ever abandon its elementary right of unilateral action, if that becomes necessary for its own security.

"That is something which has been recognized in the U.N. Charter, it is something which is implicit in the sovereignty of the Nation itself, and it is a most central and elementary obligation of government in any nation.

"But I do believe, sir, that as a matter of procedure, we can say something more than that about this business.

"We do have strong commitments to try to proceed on a multilateral basis where the security of the hemisphere is involved if we possibly can.

"I think we know from the attitude of many of the American States that if circumstances arose which would make it necessary for us to act directly against Cuba, that those circumstances themselves would impel a great many of the Latin American States to support us in that action. (Deleted from the Committee report)

"Similarly, with respect to our obligations in other parts of the world. In a certain sense it is not possible any longer for the United States to act strictly in unilateral terms. We have 42 allies, we are engaged nose to nose with the Soviet Union right around the globe. It is almost inconceivable that that engagement could become hot at one point and not become hot at others, and at each of these points we are necessarily involved with our allies.

"Therefore, if we think that we can act unilaterally we have to recognize that although we may take the action on our own decision, we necessarily involve a good many others in the action, and I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that the circumstances which would justify to the leadership of the Congress and to the President and to the American people, a direct military action against Cuba would be such as to find us alone either in this hemisphere or in other parts of the world.

"So, I think the question of unilateral action is, if I may say so, somewhat more theoretical than practical, because we will have, I am quite certain, others prepared to be with us when the circumstances are clear that we have to move in our own defense and the defense of this hemisphere."